

FARM ANIMALS AS A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF INFECTIONS

What infections can farm animals give to people?

Farm animals can carry infections in their intestines. These include *E. coli* O157:H7, *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, *Cryptosporidium*, and *Giardia*.

How do people get infected from farm animals?

The farm animals shed these infections in their droppings. The animal's hair, mouth, manure, drinking water, or pen may be contaminated. A person can be infected if they eat or drink something contaminated, or if they put dirty fingers in their mouth.



What are the symptoms of these infections in people?

Some infections cause mild stomach cramps and diarrhea. Sometimes there is severe illness with vomiting, diarrhea (maybe with blood), and other symptoms. *E. coli* O157:H7 infection in children can damage the intestine and kidneys. Children and persons with altered immune systems are more likely to have serious complications.



What types of farm animals carry these infections?

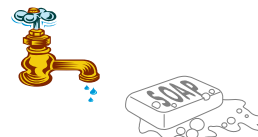
Cattle, calves, goats, sheep, pigs, chickens, and also dogs and cats may carry these infections. The animals may not appear ill. Young farm animals are more likely to be infected than adult animals.

Has human illness been linked to contact with farm animals in Washington State?

In Washington, single infections have been linked to farm animals. In May 2000, five children were ill with *E. coli* O157:H7 after visiting a dairy farm. Outbreaks have also occurred at petting zoos in Ontario, Canada, and England.

What can I do to reduce the risk of illness after touching a farm animal?

Always wash hands after touching farm animals. Make sure there is a place to wash hands when you visit farm animals. Do not eat or drink in the area where the animals are located. After visiting farm animals, wash hands thoroughly (at least 20 seconds of scrubbing with soap) before eating or putting anything into the mouth. Adults should closely supervise hand washing by children.



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[Return to Zoonotics Home Page](#)